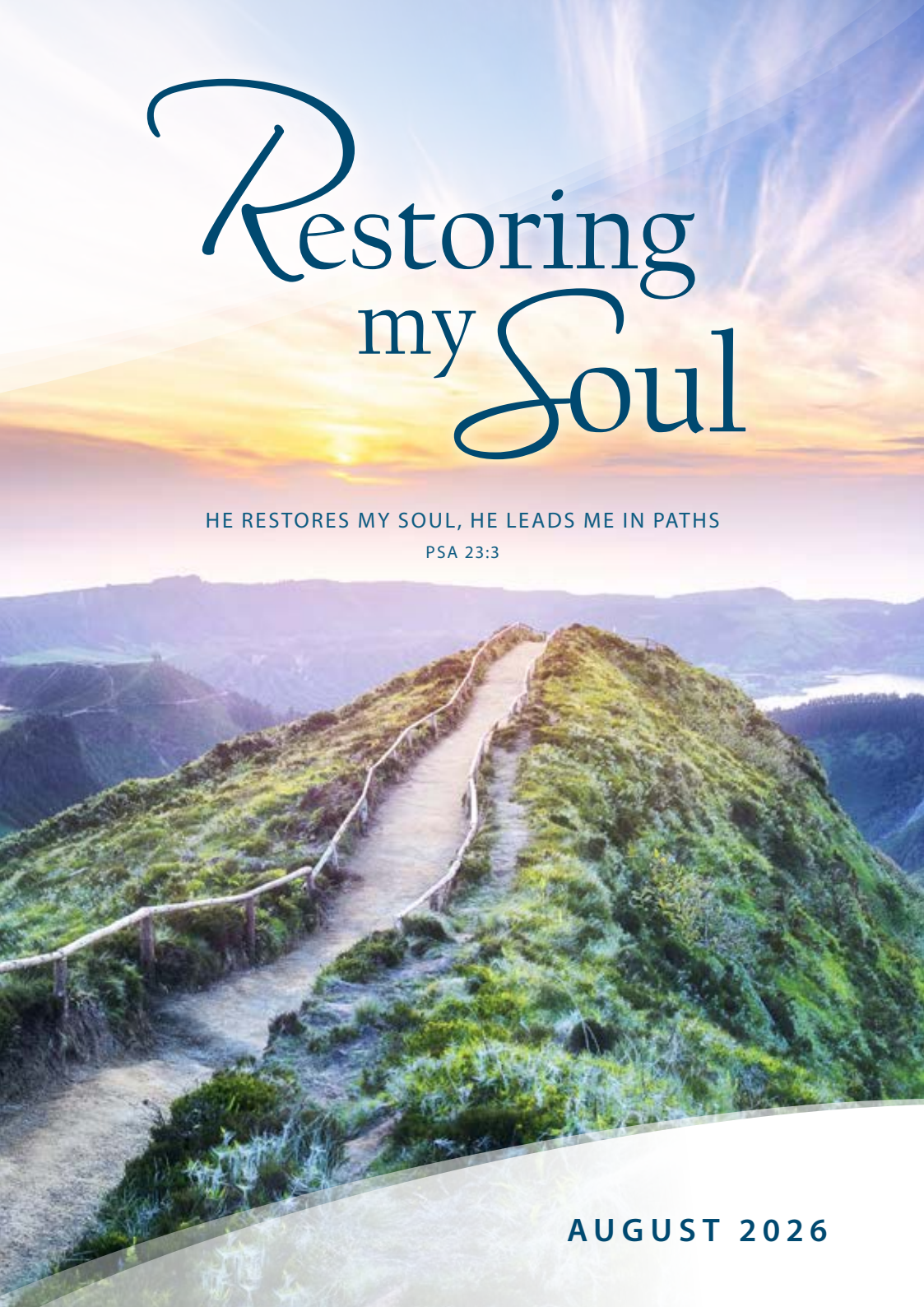




# Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

PSA 23:3

AUGUST 2026

# Restoring my Soul

A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

AUGUST 2026

# **RESTORING MY SOUL**

*A Five Day Devotional Guide*

**August 2026**

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## God is Light

In the tabernacle of Moses, the lampstand was crafted from one piece of gold, using the symbolism that belongs to an almond tree. **Exo 25:31-40**. Notably, the symbolism of the lampstand does not depict an almond tree at a static point in time. Rather, it depicts a tree that is *growing*, and it particularly highlights the three stages of development that belong to the almond flowers. Recognising that a lampstand church *grows*, it is important to consider *how it grows* to become the revelation of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh as the light of the world.

The first point regarding the growth of a lampstand church is that it grows *from its root*. The apostle John identified the root of the lampstand when he declared, 'This is the message which we have heard from Him and declared to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.' **1Jn 1:5**. When John said, 'God is Light', he was referring to the life and fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim*. The light that emanates from the fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim* is the light of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh.

When we consider the life and fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim*, we note that the community of *Elohim* – Father, Son and Holy Spirit - is the sum of all diversity. Equally, the fellowship of Yahweh is the sum of all unity. *Elohim* is Three and Yahweh is One. The sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh is the full capacity that belongs to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in the fellowship of one Spirit, to multiply Their life and fellowship through offering.

Before the foundation of the world, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit determined to make offering for the purpose of giving us Their life and including us in Their fellowship.

Further reading: 1 John 1

## The Branch of the Lord

Before the foundation of the world, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit declared, 'Let Us make man in Our image and according to Our likeness.' **Gen 1:26**. The community of *Elohim does not grow*. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are, and will always be, the only Members of the Godhead. However, the fellowship of Yahweh *does grow* as men are born of God's own life, and are then taught to abide in the fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

It is important to begin with this fundamental understanding regarding a lampstand. The purpose of a lampstand church is to reveal the multiplication of the life and fellowship of Yahweh by offering. For this reason, the *light* of a lampstand church is the *light* of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh. The light of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh, which is revealed by a lampstand church, is the *light* of the world. Notably, the light of a lampstand church is *the only light* that shines in the darkness of this present world.

When Jesus Christ emptied Himself to be born from the womb of the virgin Mary, He was the first manifestation of a lampstand that had grown from the root of Yahweh *Elohim*, through the lineage of David. The birth of Christ fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, 'There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.' **Isa 11:1**. Isaiah continued, 'The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.' **Isa 11:2**. This prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus was anointed with the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh, by the Holy Spirit, on the day of His baptism in the Jordan River.

Further reading: Isaiah 11

## The Light of the world

During His earthly ministry, Jesus stood up to read in the synagogue in His home town of Nazareth. He declared from the book of Isaiah, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.' **Luk 4:18. Isa 61:1-2.** Notably, Jesus then said to all the people, 'Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.' **Luk 4:21.**

In the flesh of mankind, Jesus was the full embodiment of the lampstand that belongs to the true tabernacle of God. Having been anointed with the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh, He revealed the light of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh to the world during His earthly ministry. Jesus testified, 'I am the Light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.' **Joh 8:12.** In the context of healing the physical and spiritual sight of the man who had been born blind, He said, 'As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.' **Joh 9:5.**

Jesus was *discipled* by the Father, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, to be the Messenger of the Covenant. Jesus testified, 'The Lord God has given Me the tongue of disciples, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as a disciple.' **Isa 50:4.** In this regard, we could liken Jesus Himself to *the first mature bud* that emerged from the first calyx, proceeding from the fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim* as the root of the lampstand.

In the symbolism of the lampstand, the calyx represents the context and process of discipleship. It is the context in which a son of God from a worthy house is discipled to become a messenger.

Further reading: John 8

## Disciple-messengers

In the symbolism of the lampstand, the bud represents a disciple-messenger who is sent to look for worthy houses. The flower represents a congregation of worthy houses that are the fruit of the ministry of the disciple-messenger.

Notably, during His earthly ministry, Jesus laid the foundation for a lampstand church that would become the light of the world once He had departed from the world. He did this in three stages. These three stages reveal the pattern of how the branch of a lampstand church grows from the *calyx* to the *bud* to the *flower*. First, revealing the principle of the *calyx*, Jesus taught His own disciples. He may have spent approximately eighteen months, or more, teaching the *twelve* disciples before He sent them to look for worthy houses.

It may have been a further twelve months before He sent the *seventy-two* disciples to also look for worthy houses. We know that the seventy-two were sent in the final season of His ministry once He had set His face toward Jerusalem for His offering journey. **Luk 9:53**. Regardless of the exact time frames, there was certainly a season of discipleship before Jesus sent the twelve and the seventy-two to look for worthy houses. Once they had been sent as disciple-messengers by Christ, they were revealing the principle of the bud.

The fruit of the ministry of the twelve disciples and the seventy-two disciples was a large group of worthy houses. The house of Martha, Mary and Lazarus was one of those houses in the town of Bethany. It is likely that the 500 brethren to whom Jesus appeared at one time, after His resurrection, were the representatives from all the worthy houses that had been established during His earthly ministry. **1Co 15:6**. After the Day of Pentecost, all of those worthy houses became foundational to the fellowship of the lampstand church in the region of Judea. Many of those houses would have been part of the *first flower* on the central branch of the lampstand in Jerusalem.

Further reading: Luke 10

## Branching out from where He is

Zechariah prophetically declared concerning Christ, 'Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the Lord; yes, He shall build the temple of the Lord. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.' **Zec 6:13.**

On the day of His resurrection, Jesus Christ was the first Man in the image and likeness of God. He is *the Man* whose name is *the Branch*. This name denotes that He is the true Lampstand. He is the anointed Branch of the Lord because He possesses the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh. Following His resurrection, Jesus Christ appeared to His disciples and taught them about the kingdom of God for forty days. During this period of forty days, the Light of the world was *in the world*, but the Light was not revealed *to the world*.

At the end of this forty-day period, Jesus Christ ascended from the Mount of Olives and sat down in the third heaven at the right hand of God. He is seated on His own throne as both the King of kings and our great High Priest. The ministry of the gospel of peace reveals His kingship and His priesthood. Since the Day of Pentecost, Jesus Christ has been branching out from His throne, which is His place at the right hand of God, to build the temple of the Lord.

The apostle Paul described the temple of the Lord by saying, 'Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into *a holy temple in the Lord*, in whom you are also being built together for *a dwelling place of God in the Spirit*.' **Eph 2:19-22.**

Further reading: Zechariah 6

## An elect lady

There is a relationship, but also a distinction, between *the temple of the Lord* and *lampstand churches*. The temple of the Lord is *the body of Christ*. The building blocks of the temple of the Lord are chosen, precious, and are living stones. In his first letter, the apostle Peter declared, 'Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.' **1Pe 2:4-5**. We are individual members of Christ's body.

In addition to being the Head of His many-membered body, Jesus Christ is also the Head of every *household* that belongs to His *lampstand churches*. The building blocks of a lampstand church are worthy houses. It is the Father who places sons of God into the fellowship of the body of Christ. **1Co 12:18**. However, it is Christ who builds His lampstand churches by discipling worthy houses through the messengers in His right hand. We recall that Jesus said to Peter, 'On this rock *I will build My church*, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.' **Mat 16:18**.

Lampstand churches, which are composed of worthy houses, are formed from the body of Christ. The apostle Peter described a fellowship of worthy houses in a local congregation that is part of a lampstand church as 'an elect lady'. **2Jn 1:1**. Referring to the congregation of worthy houses in Babylon, Peter finished his first letter by saying, 'She who is in Babylon, elect together with you; greets you'. **1Pe 5:13**. An elect lady is a local manifestation of the bride of Christ. Speaking as a messenger of Christ, the apostle Paul wrote to the congregation in Corinth, 'I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.' **2Co 11:2**.

Further reading: 2 John

## Revealed through the lampstand

In the Old Covenant, the lampstand was *one piece* of furniture in the temple. In contrast, in the New Covenant, *every piece* of furniture that belongs to the true temple in the heavenly places is now revealed through Christ's lampstand churches.

Revealing the ministry of *the altar of sacrifice*, the church is the place of offering where we present ourselves as a living sacrifice to God. In addition, we know that there was a tangible economy of offering that operated within the lampstand church in Jerusalem. We read in the book of Acts, 'Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet, and they distributed to each as anyone had need'. **Act 4:34-35**.

Revealing the ministry of *the laver*, the church is the place where we are washed by the water of the word so that we are cleansed and sanctified for our priestly service. Jesus exemplified the ministry of the true laver when He washed the feet of the disciples during the last supper. We recall that Jesus said, 'If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.' **Joh 13:14-15**.

Revealing the ministry of *the table of shewbread*, the church is the place where the word of present truth is proclaimed by Christ's messengers as the true bread from heaven. Jesus Christ has appointed overseers to serve in the presbytery for the purpose of ensuring that all who belong to the church receive food in due season. **Mat 24:45**. The bread from heaven is the provision for the house-to-house fellowship of the church. The lampstand church in Jerusalem received the word that was publicly proclaimed by the apostles in Solomon's Portico, and they then broke bread from house to house. **Act 2:46**.

Further reading: Acts 2

## The intercession and travail of the church

Revealing the ministry of *the altar of incense*, the church is the place where we join the intercession and travail of Christ. When the apostle Peter was arrested and put in prison, many from the church gathered in the house of Mary to pray for him. This fellowship of intercessory prayer among the saints was an expression of the true altar of incense. In this present season, during the reign of the seventh world kingdom, the Holy Spirit has been emphasising that there is a unique travail for Christ's lampstand churches to bring forth the manchild administration that is suitable for the fullness of times.

The manchild administration is described by the apostle John in Chapters 4 and 5 of the book of Revelation. John saw the Father seated on His own throne in the middle of the heavenly Jerusalem on the top of Mount Zion with twenty-four elders seated on thrones around His throne. **Rev 4:2-4**. The twenty-four elders represent one worldwide presbytery that will exercise the rulership of Christ over the nations in the time of the end. The twenty-four thrones belong to the administration of the throne of David. **Luk 1:32. Act 2:29-30**.

In the tabernacle of Moses, *the ark of the covenant* was the sum of all the pieces of furniture in the tabernacle. The ark of the covenant was the symbol of the throne of the Son of God. In our present day, Jesus Christ is seated upon His own intrinsic throne at the right hand of God. In contrast to the position of the lampstand in the tabernacle of old, the lampstand administration in the true temple stands *before the throne of Yahweh Son*. It reveals the One who is seated upon the throne. The glory of God that shines in the face of Christ is revealed through the lampstand administration that is in His right hand.

Further reading: Revelation 12

## Laying hold of a messenger

How does Jesus Christ branch out from where He is, seated at the right hand of God, to build the temple of the Lord? In the first case, *He reaches out His right hand to lay hold of a messenger*. The temple of the Lord is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. **Eph 2:20**. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, 'By revelation He made known to me the mystery ... which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets'. **Eph 3:3,5**. The beginning of a lampstand administration is when Christ lays hold of a messenger by His right hand and then sends them to proclaim the gospel of God.

In relation to the beginning of lampstand churches among the Gentile nations, Jesus Christ first reached out His right hand to lay hold of the apostle Paul. He was the apostle to the Gentiles. However, before we look at the ministry of Paul, it will be helpful to consider the ordination and mandate that was given to the prophet Jeremiah. The prophet Jeremiah was the forerunner of the ministry of the apostle Paul. Furthermore, Jeremiah was the 'type' of the prophetic ministry of a lampstand church in the end of the age.

The Word of the Lord came speaking to Jeremiah in the same way in which He appeared to Abram. **Jer 1:4. Gen 15:1**. The Word of the Lord is the Son of God, who is the full embodiment of the Word of Yahweh *Elohim*. The Son of God is the embodiment of *the Scriptures* that have forever been settled in the heavens as the full revelation of the dialogue of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit before the foundation of the world. **Psa 119:89**. The apostle Paul declared that *the Scriptures* preached the gospel to Abraham. **Gal 3:8**.

Further reading: Jeremiah 1

## A prophet to the Gentiles

The Lord said to Jeremiah, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.' **Jer 1:5.** Jeremiah received his identity as the outcome of procreation. However, before his spirit was formed in the womb of his mother, Jeremiah's name and the works of his sonship were discussed by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When the Word of the Lord came speaking to Jeremiah, he was being called to *meet his name* from before the foundation of the world.

Jeremiah lived during the dispensation of the Old Covenant. Unlike a child who has believing parents in the New Covenant, Jeremiah was not born of God in the womb of his mother. However, he was sanctified, or set apart, as a child who belonged to the Lord. Specifically, he was set apart to be a prophet to the nations. In a similar way, the apostle Paul testified that he had been set apart from his mother's womb to be an apostle to the nations. He said, 'It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles.' **Gal 1:15-16.**

Jeremiah was born into a priestly family in the land of Benjamin. **Jer 1:1.** It is important to appreciate that Jeremiah was more than a prophet to the nation of Israel. He was called to be *a prophet to the Gentiles*. Even though the focus of Jeremiah's ministry was toward the southern kingdom of Judah before, and during, the Babylonian exile, his prophetic mandate was to all the Gentile nations. He was the forerunner to the apostle Paul. Paul came from the tribe of Benjamin and was called by God to be the apostle to the Gentiles.

Further reading: Galatians 1

## The ordination of Jeremiah

When the Word of the Lord first spoke to Jeremiah, he responded in unbelief because of his age. The Lord said to him, 'Do not say, "I am a youth", for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you.' **Jer 1:7-8.** The Lord was effectively saying to Jeremiah, 'Do not fear, I am your shield.' If he continued to look into the face of the Lord, he would be delivered from the fear that was associated with looking into the faces of those who rejected his ministry. **Jer 1:19.**

Jeremiah then testified, 'The Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. See I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant"'. **Jer 1:9-10.** When we consider Jeremiah's testimony, we note that there are *four elements* that comprise the ordination of a messenger. The ordination of a messenger in this manner is the beginning of the growth of a lampstand church.

The first element of Jeremiah's ordination is that the Lord *stretched out His hand* to lay hold of him. This is the first step in the ordination of every messenger who belongs to the apostolic administration of Christ. A messenger is not self-appointed. Jesus Christ must lay hold of a messenger and impart ascension-gift grace through His right hand. Paul declared that when Christ ascended on high, He gave gifts to men. **Eph 4:8.** He gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastor-teachers, or teacher-pastors. **Eph 4:11.**

Further reading: Acts 9

## Presenting ourselves for fellowship

The second element of Jeremiah's ordination is that the Lord *touched Jeremiah's mouth*. We can compare this with the experience of the prophet Isaiah. When he saw the Lord of hosts on His throne, and heard the seraphim proclaiming the holiness of the fellowship of Yahweh, Isaiah declared, 'Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.' **Isa 6:5**. Despite his prophetic grace and ministry, Isaiah was illuminated to see how far he had fallen from the heights of the fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim*, which is 'holy, holy, holy'. **Isa 6:3. Rev 4:8**.

In Isaiah's revelation, a seraph cleansed his lips with a live coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. **Isa 6:6**. The coal from the altar joined Isaiah to the fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim's* offering and enabled him to present himself for fellowship with the Lord. In the New Covenant, it is Jesus Christ who extends His right hand, by the Holy Spirit, to cleanse the lips of every messenger who has been illuminated to see how far they have fallen from the heights of Mount Zion. The Lord used His own hand to touch the mouth of Jeremiah because He was ordaining him as the type of an apostolic administration.

The third element of Jeremiah's ordination as a messenger is that the Lord *put His words in his mouth*. It is important that we understand the distinction between the Lord cleansing the lips of a messenger, and the Lord putting His words in the mouth of a messenger. The lips of a messenger need to be cleansed so that they can participate in the fellowship *of the right hand of Christ*. The Lord can then put His words in their mouth, and send them as a messenger *from His right hand* to proclaim His word and to invite their hearers to join the same fellowship.

Further reading: Isaiah 6

## I am ready to perform My word

The fourth element of Jeremiah's ordination as a messenger is that the Lord *gave to him prophetic authority over nations and kingdoms*. He had authority to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant. **Jer 1:10**. Jeremiah's prophetic mandate to build and to plant was initially fulfilled by the apostle Paul. In relation to *building*, we are reminded that the apostle Paul described himself as 'a wise master builder'. He laid the foundation of Jesus Christ in every place, and then exhorted every man to take heed how they built their own house upon that foundation. **1Co 3:10**. Similarly, Paul was sent to plant lampstand churches among the Gentile nations. **1Co 3:8**.

The mandate given to Jeremiah extended beyond his ministry to the Jewish nation in relation to the kingdom of Babylon in his own day. He was the 'type' of the ministry of Christ's lampstand administration as we approach the time of the end. Immediately after Jeremiah received his personal mandate, the Word of the Lord came again, saying, 'Jeremiah, what do you see?' He responded, 'I see a branch of an almond tree.' **Jer 1:11**. *The branch of an almond tree is a lampstand*.

The Lord declared, 'You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word.' **Jer 1:12**. The key point is that the Lord uses a lampstand administration to proclaim His word and to accomplish His purpose among the nations. The lampstand is the Lord's prophetic instrument that reveals the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh as the Light of the world. The Lord will use a lampstand administration to fulfil His purpose in the end of the age, which includes judging the seventh world kingdom and bringing over half of the world's population into the kingdom of God.

Further reading: Isaiah 60

## The administration that is suitable

Christ's lampstand churches are presently in travail to bring forth the manchild administration that is suitable for the fullness of times. Notably, the administration that is suitable for the time of the end is still a lampstand administration. When the Father takes His seat, the administration will not shift from the lampstand to another piece of furniture in the true temple. Rather, the administration of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh will move from 'the face' of the Son's throne to 'the face' of the Father's throne. The seven presbyteries in the right hand of Christ will become one, worldwide presbytery around the throne of the Father. And the seven lampstand churches will become one, worldwide lampstand that reveals the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh before the Father's throne.

The prophet Isaiah described the ministry of the church as being one, worldwide lampstand in the time of the end. He said, 'Arise, shine, for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord [the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh] is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising ... then you shall see and become radiant, and your heart shall swell with joy; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.' **Isa 60:1-5.**

The lampstand administration of the church will continue to proclaim and to accomplish the word of the Lord until the door to the temple of God in the heavenly places is closed. At that time, Moses and Elijah will replace the evangelistic ministry of the church as the Light of the world for a period of 3½ years. Notably, Moses and Elijah are called 'the two olive trees' (anointed ones) and 'the two lampstands' who stand before the Lord of the whole earth. **Rev 11:4.**

Further reading: Isaiah 62

## The ministry of the apostle Paul

In relation to planting and growing lampstand churches among the Gentiles, Jesus Christ first reached out His right hand to lay hold of the apostle Paul. After the Lord met Paul on the road to Damascus, the Lord sent Ananias to lay hands on Paul so that he would regain his sight. The Lord said to Ananias concerning Paul, 'Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.' **Act 9:15-16**. God had sanctified Paul from his mother's womb to be a servant in whom Christ would be glorified. **Gal 1:15-16**.

The Lord declared through the prophet Isaiah, 'Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles ... I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles.' **Isa 42:1,6**. Of course, this prophetic statement applied first to Jesus Christ. However, it applied also to the ministry of the apostle Paul. Furthermore, it applies to the ministry of lampstand churches during the church age, and it will apply to the ministry of the 144 000 in the time of the end.

Likewise, the Lord declared, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.' **Isa 49:5-6**. We know that this prophecy was applicable to the apostle Paul because, on his first missionary journey to the region of Galatia, he quoted this passage and applied it directly to his own ministry. **Act 13:47**.

Further reading: Acts 13

## Paul's ministry in Ephesus

Jesus Christ personally disciplined the apostle Paul so that he could be sent as a disciple-messenger to the Gentiles. As a messenger in the right hand of Christ, Paul was the embodiment of a lampstand among the nations. The Lord had anointed him with the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh. He revealed the light of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh as a light to the Gentiles wherever he travelled and proclaimed the gospel of God. In the first case, we can liken the ministry of the apostle Paul as a disciple-messenger to the first bud on the central branch of the lampstand.

To illustrate the growth of lampstand churches, it will be helpful to consider Paul's ministry in the city of Ephesus. The fruit of Paul's ministry in Ephesus was seven lampstand churches in the region of Asia. The book of Acts recorded that, when Paul first came to Ephesus, he found some disciples. It is reasonable to assume that they were disciples of Apollos. **Act 18:24**. We know that Apollos preached in Ephesus before Paul arrived. He was an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures. We could liken Apollos to an evangelical preacher who proclaimed the lordship of Christ, but he did not declare the gospel of sonship until he was instructed by Aquila and Priscilla. **Act 18:26**.

When Paul arrived, he immediately asked the disciples about their understanding and appropriation of the gospel of sonship. He said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' The disciples replied, 'We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.' **Act 19:2**. The entire conversation is not recorded in the Scripture, but we can assume that Paul took the time to explain the steps of salvation to them. This would have included the significance of Christ sending the Holy Spirit into our spirit as the Spirit of adoption who enables us to cry out, 'Abba! Father!' **Rom 8:15**.

Further reading: Acts 19

## The first congregation in Ephesus

We know that the apostle Paul preached the steps of salvation and the significance of the Holy Spirit to the believers in Ephesus, because he later wrote to them, 'In Him [Christ] you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, *the gospel of your salvation*; in whom also, having believed, you were *sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory'. **Eph 1:13-14.**

Paul's first question to the Ephesians regarding the Holy Spirit focused on the need for *God to abide in us*. His second question to the Ephesians focused on the need for *us to abide in God*. He proceeded to ask them, 'Into what then were you baptised?' **Act 19:3.** They replied that they had been baptised into John's baptism. That is, they had been baptised in water as an outward sign of their repentance from sin, in response to the gospel that had been proclaimed to them by Apollos.

Having listened to the way that they answered his question, Paul then proceeded to upgrade their understanding of baptism. **Act 19:4-5.** In response to Paul's teaching, this group of newly born sons of God were then baptised into the name of Christ as an expression of their faith to become *His disciples*, and to learn from the messengers of Christ how to abide in the kingdom of God.

The congregation in Ephesus began with about twelve families who had been immersed into the name of the Lord Jesus and immersed into the Holy Spirit to become witnesses of Christ as part of a lampstand administration. **Act 19:5-7.** We could liken this congregation to *the first flower* in the central branch of the lampstand. Paul then lived among this congregation in Ephesus. In this regard, Paul was no longer the messenger coming *to Ephesus*; he was a messenger living *in Ephesus*. We could liken Paul's ministry in Ephesus to the *bud* above the first flower on the central branch of the lampstand.

Further reading: Ephesians 1

## Public and house-to-house ministry

Paul spent three months proclaiming the gospel of God in the synagogue in Ephesus. In contrast to the ministry of Apollos, who reasoned from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ, the focus of Paul's ministry was to proclaim the kingdom of God. **Act 19:8.** Paul proclaimed the gospel of sonship. Paul's ministry had a polarising impact upon those who belonged to the synagogue. Some believed and became his disciples. However, there were others who hardened their heart and did not believe. When they began to publicly speak evil of the Way, Paul departed from them and took the disciples with him from the synagogue.

Paul then began to teach in the school of Tyrannus. **Act 19:9.** We know that he did this for two whole years. **Act 19:10.** It is likely that a believer named Tyrannus allowed Paul to use his school building. In the first case, the school building replaced the Jewish synagogue as the context for Paul's public ministry. Paul taught daily in the school of Tyrannus, in the same way in which the apostles had taught daily in Solomon's Portico. However, we know that Paul also taught from house to house. When he later called the Ephesian presbytery to Miletus, Paul reflected, 'I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house.' **Act 20:20.**

In addition to his public ministry, Paul may have used other classrooms in the school of Tyrannus for the discipleship of worthy houses. Of course, he would have also visited and stayed in many of the houses in the Ephesian region. Whether the actual teaching happened in the houses or in the school, Paul manifested a discipleship initiative toward worthy houses. We could liken Paul's discipleship initiative toward the worthy houses in Ephesus as *the calyx* at the beginning of a new branch of the lampstand. He was looking for disciples *from worthy houses* who were able to join the fellowship of the presbytery in the region.

Further reading: Acts 20

## The word grew and multiplied

When a disciple-messenger was sent from the fellowship of the presbytery in Ephesus into a new region to look for worthy houses, it was as though a new *bud* had emerged from the *calyx*. When the disciple-messenger established a new group of worthy houses, it was as though the *bud* had produced a new *flower* on the branch. In this manner, the branches of the lampstand church in Ephesus grew from *calyx* to *bud* to *flower*.

It is likely that the one lampstand church in Ephesus contained many *branches*. Each branch would have included multiple congregations within a particular region or geographical area. The leaders from each branch of the lampstand, who belonged to the one presbytery in Ephesus, would have travelled regularly to fellowship with Paul. Furthermore, they would have travelled from congregation to congregation within their branch for the purpose of publicly proclaiming the word of God and discipling the worthy houses in each place.

During his public and house-to-house ministry in Ephesus, Paul evidently identified some men from worthy houses who had received ascension-gift grace from Christ. Paul was able to send those men as disciple-messengers into the regions beyond Ephesus to establish new lampstand churches. Having been sent from the right hand of Christ by Paul, each ascension-gift messenger became the first *bud* on the central branch of a new lampstand. For example, we know that the church in Colossae was started by a man named Epaphras. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul referred to Epaphras as ‘our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf’ **Col 1:7**.

The book of Acts summarised the growth of lampstand churches from Paul’s ministry in Ephesus by saying that ‘this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks’ **Act 19:10**. The fruit of Paul’s ministry in Ephesus was seven lampstand churches in the region of Asia.

Further reading: Colossians 4

## I have this against you

Jesus addressed the presbytery in Ephesus as the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the middle of the seven golden lampstands. **Rev 2:1**. He is seated upon His throne at the right hand of God. However, He walks among His lampstand churches through the ministry of the seven stars in His right hand. Jesus commended the presbytery in Ephesus for their commitment to Christian living. They refused to normalise immoral or unsanctified behaviour. Furthermore, the Ephesian presbytery did not receive self-proclaimed apostles who travelled as itinerant messengers with their own self-defined ministry. **Rev 2:2**. Jesus also commended the Ephesian presbytery because they had laboured for His name's sake and had not grown weary. **Rev 2:3**.

However, despite all of this, Jesus rebuked the presbytery in Ephesus because they had left their first love. Jesus said, 'Nevertheless, I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly [in judgement] and remove your lampstand from its place – unless you repent.' **Rev 2:5**. First love is the fellowship of Yahweh. It describes the fellowship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in one Spirit. First love is revealed by the fellowship of offering in which one lays down life to reveal another.

It is important to recognise that there is a restoration to first love, and an expression of the first works, for an individual son of God, a married couple, a household, an extended household, a presbytery, and a congregation. The first works are the works of our faith obedience as a disciple. The first work for an individual son of God is to present themselves to the presbytery to be disciplined in relation to what it means to abide in the name of the Father, the name of the Son, and the name of the Holy Spirit. The fellowship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the fellowship of first love.

Further reading: Revelation 2

A scenic landscape featuring a dirt path that winds up a grassy hill. The path is bordered by a simple wooden fence on the right side. The hill is covered in lush green grass and some small shrubs. In the background, there are rolling hills and a valley with a body of water. The sky is a mix of blue, orange, and yellow, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is peaceful and inspiring.

# Restoring my Soul